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LETTER DATED 27 JUNE 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the upcoming debate in the Security Council concerning the restructuring of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). The United Nations presence in Croatia is mandated by the basic agreement (S/1995/951, annex), and Security Council resolutions 1037 (1996) of 15 January 1996 and 1079 (1996) of 15 November 1996 to last up to two years, ending on 15 January 1998.

As pointed out in the letter dated 13 June 1997 from my Minister for Foreign Affairs addressed to you (S/1997/454), the Government of Croatia is of the view that the United Nations, in cooperation with the Croatian authorities, has successfully achieved the goals set out in the relevant documents, and can begin its progressive disengagement from the Danube region of Croatia. The successes of UNTAES mandate, reflected by the documents programme in particular, can now be maintained by the newly elected and constituted local authorities and monitored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

In regard to the latter, I am pleased to inform you that the Permanent Council of OSCE has adopted a relevant decision. In its decision No. 176 of 26 June 1997 the Permanent Council called for the strengthening of the present OSCE mission in Croatia beginning in July 1997, with the view to expanding its monitoring responsibilities into the Danube region of Croatia once the United Nations mandate there terminates and the departure is completed on 15 January 1998 (see annex).

The new OSCE mandate in Croatia fully satisfies the long-term monitoring objective of the basic agreement and resolution 1079 (1996), and strengthens the ability of the United Nations to exit the region by 15 January 1998 consistent with the timetable envisioned by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council of 23 June (S/1997/487).

My Government believes that the Secretary-General's exit strategy can now be clearly reflected in an operational context in the upcoming resolution, especially in regard to the military component. The situation in the region

will also be strengthened if the Security Council gives support to the newly elected civilian bodies there, with a view to having the bodies assume their lawful responsibilities in full as quickly as possible. Transparency and accountability are two key elements for maintaining stability in the region.

I should like to reiterate that the Government of Croatia is fully committed to its obligations in respect of the Danube region, and will continue to cooperate with the international community in the consolidation of peace and stability there.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ivan SIMONOVIC
Ambassador
Permanent Represenative

Annex

Decision No. 176 adopted at the Permanent Council of the OSCE on 26 June 1997

The Permanent Council decides to:

- Pursue OSCE tasks in the Republic of Croatia on the basis of Permanent Council decision No. 112 of 18 April 1996, as amended by this decision;

- Reaffirm the availability of all OSCE institutions to assist in the development of democratic institutions, processes and mechanisms;

- Authorize the Mission:

  - To assist with and to monitor implementation of Croatian legislation and agreements and commitments entered into by the Croatian Government on:

    - Two-way return of all refugees and displaced persons and on protection of their rights, and

    - The protection of persons belonging to national minorities;

  - To make specific recommendations to the Croatian authorities and refer, as appropriate, urgent issues to the Permanent Council;

- Build up Mission personnel, starting July 1997, to a ceiling of 250 expatriates with a view to full deployment by 15 January 1998. The personnel will be deployed by decision of the Head of Mission;

- Extend the mandate of the reinforced OSCE Mission for a period until 31 December 1998. Prolongation and changes of mandate will be subject to a new decision by the Permanent Council.

The Permanent Council takes note of the agreement between the Croatian authorities and the Chairman-in-Office to consider this decision as having the effect of amending the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the Government of Croatia and OSCE.